

~~Apparatus No. 10/050,002~~

Amendment in Reply to the Final Office action dated Oct. 20, 2005

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The foregoing proposed amendments are submitted in response to the Final Office action in order to emphasize the patentable distinction of the present invention over the prior art references relied on for final rejections, without introducing new matter, as hereinafter pointed out.

Claims 1-5 were all finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over the disclosure in the Makino patent of record as the primary prior art reference, in view of the Montgomery et al. patent of record relied on as a secondary prior art reference. Claims 6 and 7 dependent from claim 1 were also finally rejected over the Makino and Montgomery et al. patents, in view of the disclosure in the Merkle et al. patent relied on as another secondary prior art reference. According to such final rejections, it was conceded that the Makino patent fails to disclose sensors for controlling alignment and positioning of stoppers 25 (reception means) or positioning actuators that extend in 90° relation to each other. The Merkle et al. patent was therefore relied on as allegedly teaching use of actuators 11 and 12 as the basis for making an obviousness judgment with respect to the conceded distinction of the present invention over the disclosures in the Makino and Montgomery et al. patents.

Careful review of the disclosure in the Merkle et al. patent reveals that the positioning actuator 11 effects displacement of a first carriage 7 along tracks 10 in the direction of vehicle movement for vehicle 3, on which the carriage 7 is positioned. The other positioning actuator 12 imparts displacement to a second carriage 8 in a direction at 90° to the aforesaid displacement direction of the first carriage 7, rather than the carriage 7 itself since the carriage 8 is slidably mounted on the carriage 7. Accordingly, claim 1 as amended clearly distinguishes over the

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disclosures in the Makino, Montgomery et al. and Merkle et al. patents by specifying:

"positioning actuator means for displacement of each of the reception tables in two 90° related directions relative to the platform--". An allowance of amended claim 1 together with claims 2-7 dependent therefrom is therefore in order.

In view of the foregoing referred to distinguishing limitations of the present invention as set forth in amended claim 1, entry of the proposed amendments submitted herewith and an allowance of the application is requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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